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NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that yesterday in the U.S. District Court in Norfolk Tion Ashby, also known as "T", age 29, of Norfolk, Virginia, was sentenced to 124 months imprisonment for possession of crack cocaine with intent to distribute and for possession of a firearm and ammunition by a convicted felon.

The federal charges arose out of the arrest of Ashby by Virginia Beach Police Department narcotics officers on state charges following the arrangement of a controlled sale of crack cocaine by Ashby to an informant. The case was referred to the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) for federal prosecution under Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN)/EXILE.

PSN/EXILE is a federal program that uses a joint federal and state multi-agency approach to targeting armed criminals for prosecution in federal court for possession or use of firearms in violation of federal laws. It is a part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, a nationwide effort by the Department of Justice aimed at reducing violent crimes. Most firearms cases involve or are related to drug trafficking. Since its inception in Hampton Roads in late 1997, Project PSN/EXILE has produced over 1082 convictions and removed over 1841 firearms from armed criminals.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney James A. Metcalfe.

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